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Meeting held at Rainier Beach High School – Thursday, April 16, 2008

Transportation

- Many of the students said that they would use light rail once, just to try it. Reasons why they would not use it: it is not convenient, light rail does not go to the destinations that they normally go to (Southcenter Mall, Renton, etc.), scared and paranoid that it will fall over, and safety concerns.
- After we handed out a map of light rail travel times and provided more information about what the light rail is all about, all of the students said they would use it over the slow and smelly bus #7. They liked the idea of extending the light rail line to UW, Northgate, and the east side.
- Majority of the students walk to get to destinations. Like walking for the fresh air, being outside, and for exercise. Had some complaints about sidewalk maintenance.
- They believe that automobiles are faster than using transit or walking, saves time, more convenient, gets you to where you need to go in a direct way, allows you to haul goods, but they also have a good understanding that cars are expensive due to maintenance, gas, and insurance costs, and are bad for the environment – cause of pollution.
- Only of the students rides a bicycle.
- Feelings about traffic: always construction on roads – causes traffic, parents use back roads to avoid congestion, like traffic circles – slows cars down and prevents accidents.

Question: What types of shops, services, jobs would you like to see around the light rail stations:

- Mini-malls
- Trader Joes – or some grocery store that sells organic food (and is closer to neighborhood – Seward Park PCC is too far away to access)
- Need greater variety of banks
- Different kinds of cuisine – teriyaki, subway, fast food restaurants
- A new library (or increase capacity at RB library – more computers and just bigger in general)
- Park or open space instead of all commercial – a place to relax or hang out with friends
- Target
- More places to shop – retail stores
- Movie theater (currently have to go outside of Seattle to watch movies – Southcenter or Renton – will go to Northgate when LR light is extended)
- Want more taco buses (one student, others did not agree)
- Can get rid of Rent-A-Center

Housing:

- The students feel that too many homes have been betting built in recent year, with many of the homes still vacant. They did not think that more housing needed to be

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built in the Rainier Beach neighborhood. There is great housing supply, but no one is buying the new places.

- They do realize the advantage to living near a light rail station (no need to drive as much and better access to the rail), but they also believe that costs will increase, meaning that poor people could not live there.
- One student, from Hong Kong, did not understand why it took so long to build the rail – he compared tunnels being built much quicker than how it happens in the US.
- We talked about living in cities that have more people than Seattle does and what the students thought about more populated cities. One student had lived in Chicago and liked living with more people, more diversity, and better interaction with people from different cultures. Another student, from Hong Kong, thought that everything was different, but with more stress as it is more crowded.
- About half of the students live in single family detached homes and half live in some kind of apartment/duplex. Most students said that they would live in apartment/condo style housing close to the station areas.

Community centers and parks:

- The teen program at the Rainier Beach Community Center has a wide variety of free programs that they participate in.
- They do utilize the parks in the neighborhood, but do not travel too far outside of the neighborhood very often. They hang out with their families and have parties in the parks and play basketball. One student organizes outings to the park for her mentoring program.
- Barnett Park, in the Central District, has good playground equipment for younger kids (which the students still like to play with occasionally). Parks in their neighborhood need better playground equipment for little kids, like a wading pool.
- They do feel that the parks need to be better maintained, cleaned up more frequently. They do not like to see vandalism in their parks (but it is always there – graffiti). They did not know of any dog parks in their neighborhood, but believe people should pick up after their dogs as there is a lot of poo in their neighborhood.
- The parks need better signage to let people know where the parks are.
- Mapes Creek: too much trash – students would be willing to help maintain it by having trash pick-up days. Think that students need to start to get fined for littering; nothing else will stop the students from throwing their trash on the ground. They also think that the people living in the adjacent apartments should help to maintain the pathway.

Important services needed as the neighborhood grows:

- The students think that more businesses in the neighborhood would be a good idea, especially those that provide jobs for high school students.
- Street vendors at the station areas sound cool.
- There should be a community college in the neighborhood or some place where those who have dropped out of high school can go to get an education. Too many people

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hanging out on the streets. Not too many jobs in the community, most people (parents and other adults) have to travel outside of Rainier Beach for work.

- A bigger library is needed, with more computers.

Crime:

- Want the crime to get out of the neighborhood (even though not too many of the recent crime has occurred in Rainier Beach, mainly hear about crime happening in the Othello area).
- Think there should be a crime prevention center in the community.
- Employment opportunities might help to solve problems with crime.
- When the police come to their school, it is never about how to prevent crime; it is only to bust a student. More police would be good in the school and get to know the students.

Gentrification:

- Some of the students recognize how the Central District and Columbia City have changed and is being gentrified. More white people and more restaurants.
- Students did not think too much change would occur in Rainier Beach neighborhood. They did think that more people would move into the community, but it will just be more diverse as people would be attracted to move to SE due to the LR. Do not make the connection that what happened in CC and the CD would happen in Rainier Beach.
- World is about making money.

Negative perception of Rainier Beach:

- The students do not understand why so many people think so negatively about their school and community. Outsiders think that bad stuff happens at their school and parents will not send their kids there.
- The whole area is stereotyped.
- Students have a lot of pride for their school.
- Media never tells positive stories about SE Seattle.
- Light rail will bring more people to Rainier Beach and hope that the new people will see SE Seattle in a different light, more positive.